

drinking warm wine and
rolling smokes.
at 6 in the evening we charm our blood and
our manner
as we walk our faces through the
spiderwebs.

we've got it right
we've got it right --
the raven and the waves
the tired sunsets across the tired
people --
it takes a lifetime to die and
no time at
all.

When All The Animals Lie Down

got it right, Gus?

Gus had this rag around his
head and was digging at the
dirt. he'd been digging 15
minutes.

I'm getting it, said
Gus.

we were sitting on the side of
a hill watching the 5:30 p.m.
traffic
on the Pasadena freeway.

Gus was trying to get that
round spot in the ground
for hip and
shoulder.

what do you guys do when
it rains? I
asked.

we've got a sheet of plywood
or 2 in the brush, said
Larry, either that or we
go to the mission.

Gus tried the hole. it was
all right. then he came over and
sat with us.

we watched the cars on the
freeway. they barely
moved.

I'm sure sorry for those
bastards, said Gus.

all around us was grass
and trees and brush. a
white cat ran by. we sat there
smoking our rolled
cigarettes. by the time those
bastards got home we'd be
asleep.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles, California

The Beautiful People

They gather together
like gnats swinging in
circles, massed in columns
of air, holding uneasy
motion. I watch them
from my window. They
saunter around the oval
pool in swim suits
that allow large breathing
spaces. They fondle their
cigarettes and drinks.
Even above the buzz
of their voices. I hear
the ice in their glasses
clink. I watch the water
churn occasionally as they
dive under the shadow
of the sun. Then surface,
gulping air. They hold
their smiles in place
along with their skimpy
clothes. They accept
their place. They consider
themselves the beautiful
people. And they are.

A Story

When they married
everyone said how
she was beneath him.
No one, family or
friends, would have
anything to do
with him after that.
And so he just
stayed at home
with his new wife
while the years
went on and for
the entire length
of their marriage
(successful) she was
always beneath him
even though they
never had any children.